



Food Cop's "Concession" Stand Hawks Hot Air !

You wouldn't expect **Kelly Brownell** — the architect of the Twinkie tax and head of Yale's activist Rudd Center — to say something nice about a Twinkie, but at the New York City soda ban public hearing this week **he did just that**, saying, "A Twinkie or a Cheeto has at least a little nutrition." His point was to contrast the supposedly unhealthy soft drinks with the classic snack, so this isn't Brownell moderating his views. Rather, it is a ploy designed to isolate the seemingly easiest target in a broader crusade. It's kind of like how a pack of lions will pick off the weakest animal — though they would gladly feast on the whole herd.

There's no indication that Brownell would be satisfied with simply banning large cup sizes, as proposed in the Big Apple, or with even taxing soda. After all, Brownell made his name making this call for wide-ranging food taxes in *The New York Times*: "Fatty foods would be judged on their nutritive value per calorie or gram of fat. The least healthy would be given the highest tax rate." So while Brownell might be more interested in fighting soda today, there's no reason to think he won't turn on Twinkies tomorrow.

Don't believe us? The groundwork for an intensive campaign is already being **laid against cereal makers**. (We can easily imagine these thoughts in the heads of Rudd Center researchers: "Unsweetened oat bran rations for everyone!") Brownell also said of his anti-soda crusade: "You have to start somewhere." It's all about moving the goalposts. Given his history, we would be surprised if he wasn't back on the warpath against tasty solid snacks as soon as the hearing ended.

If that's not bad enough, Brownell's Rudd Center is at the forefront of **promoting the dubious claim that foods are "addictive."** Never mind that **Cambridge University researchers** evaluated that poorly substantiated claim and found that "criteria for substance dependence translate poorly to food-related behaviors." Brownell hopes to **"change the legal landscape."** If he gets his wish, it'll be off to the salad line with the rest of us.

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